

SESAME

Number 227: January 2020

AM at Victoria Terrace/ BDRC Update / Prison Chaplaincy / On Retreat at Bamford/World Day of Prayer 2020/Witness at Faslane: 2020 dates/NFPB trustees' statement/Thoughts of W^m. Penn/GM at Perth/'The Book' at Woodbrooke/ Appeals (*old books; new blood*)/ AM Minutes



William Penn (*See pages 9 and 23*)

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to Alan Frith (email: ar.frith@btinternet.com) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 10 March 2020**. The Editors reserve the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email sending as an attachment *and* in the body of the email. An email version of *Sesame* is available in PDF format. Contact the Editors.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Our first Area Meeting of 2020 is to be held at 7.00 pm on Monday 20 January, at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL, and will cover our usual business of membership matters, nominations and appointments. It will also include: a review of all those organisations which we currently support financially; a report from Quaker Life about resources in mental health; and suggestions from the Meeting House Management Committee about immediately achievable 'green challenges' for 7 Victoria Terrace – which we might all learn from. We will also hear from local meetings about how to improve area meeting as an event, as part of reviewing the 2016 STIR process.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Saturday 9 November 2019
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Between-meetings procedure: *Global Investor Statement on Climate Change*
5. Greening our Edinburgh Meeting House: proposals from the management committee
6. Matters from Local Meetings
 - 6.1. Responses to STIR consultation
 - 6.2. Tweeddale relocation
7. Membership matters
8. Nominations & appointments
9. Reports
 - 9.1. Revision of the Book of Discipline – *Mary Woodward*
[see opposite]
 - 9.2. Resources on Mental Health – *Sue Proudlove*
(our representative on Quaker Life Representative Council)
 - 9.3. Regular support to external organisations –
Report from our Treasury Team
10. Conferences & events
11. Correspondence and announcements
12. Closing minute

Alastair Cameron
Clerk, South East Scotland Area Meeting

Book of Discipline Revision Committee – an Update

The Book of Discipline Revision Committee met four times in 2019, appeared at Yearly Meeting in a 'Meet Your Committee' session, and hosted a conference at Woodbrooke in November entitled *Why have a Book of Discipline?*

I have previously reported on our meetings up to October, and some of you will have met us when we joined in all-age worship at Victoria Terrace on the Sunday of our October meeting. The weekend was made more colourful by the lively pro-independence demonstration on the Saturday...

More Friends, including Alison Burnley, were able to meet us at Woodbrooke in November. She will be reporting her experience of the weekend [*see page 13*]: I just want to say a little about it from the point of view of a committee member who was also part of the conference planning group.

Our committee weekends are intense, packed, exhilarating and exhausting in equal measure, and most of the time we are in our own little world. The Woodbrooke weekend was the first time I saw our committee's work in the context of Friends from across the UK and truly understood that our task is being done on behalf of all of us. I greatly appreciated the interest shown in our work and Friends' reactions to us as individuals and as a group: the highlight for me was the Friend who stood up during our closing session to announce that, having spent time with us, they were confident that we had our heads screwed on the right way and could be trusted to do the job.

Our December committee meeting was at Woodbrooke, and again we worked extremely hard. I was deemed to have been so good at helping plan the November conference that I was appointed to the planning group for our involvement at Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) at Bath in August.

The key messages from our weekend were:

In planning the shape of our work we have reflected on both the overarching themes which express our understanding of what the new book is about, and the underlying threads which connect us to the divine, which run through all our work and which are the unity of Quakerism. We have explored the significance of these for our practical next steps.

In a meeting that involved much practical thinking and a lot of post-it notes we have been brought to a place of spiritual depth and experienced a sense of growing excitement in seeing the plan beginning to take shape, which feels like a key point in the gestation of our work.

Following the success of the Woodbrooke conference in November, we will continue to inform Friends of our progress by varied means, including at YMG. We are extending our use of social media to include Instagram as well as Facebook and Twitter. Our aim is that engagement in the process of revision will spread to all parts of BYM.

Our next committee meeting is at Friends House at the end of January. We will continue the work we began in December: reflecting on the shape of

the Book and beginning to plan the order in which things need to be done. We will also be using the knowledge gained from the Woodbrooke conference – in particular the Advices & Queries Friends created for us. We will ensure that Friends are kept informed of our work and, where possible, invited to be involved.

With this in mind, we are planning to hold various “special interest” sessions at YMG in Bath this August – I’m convenor of the planning group who worked very hard to get our requests for space and time on the YMG programme to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee by their deadline of 31 December. We will continue to plan our sessions at YMG with the intention of involving as many Friends as possible in a variety of ways.

If you are coming to YMG, do please come to one of the sessions: if not, please continue to uphold us prayerfully, especially me – quite literally, I can’t do this without your help!

Mary Woodward

Prison Chaplaincy

Being able to help prisoners has for so long been a wish of mine and yet it is difficult to pin down its origin. Like many of us, seeing a person or an animal incapacitated or without agency raises the desire to offer help; and losing one’s freedom to make the simplest of choices while being controlled by a rigid regime of conformity has been my image of prison life. Since becoming the Quaker representative at HMP Edinburgh I have been introduced to the extent of a very soul shrivelling system. Yet I am still impressed by the way inmates and prison officers can be cheerful on a daily basis and this gives me reassurance that the strength of the human spirit is alive and well.

The full time Church of Scotland chaplain and I have successfully negotiated the idiosyncrasies of the prison system and completed our “trial run” of Quaker groups for Creative Listening. The men who attend are all long-term prisoners and have become more and more enthusiastic in their attendance and ability to speak for themselves. They have registered their appreciation of our readings from *Quaker Faith & Practice* and their chance to have some silence, along with the confidential space to share their thoughts. “Lock downs” happen, and in the past prison officers forgot to bring them along but all these hindrances give the men important issues for discussion at our next meeting. Several times disappointment, anger and the impotence of being in prison may lead to active decision making. One of the prisoners has produced a leaflet about our group and Quaker thinking. He wants to distribute copies amongst inmates on other “flats”. He was the initiator whom I met a couple of years ago at the Carol Service run by the Salvation Army and Prison Chaplaincy, and it is thanks to him

and his previous experience of a Quaker Group in Peterhead Prison that we meet today. I am not sure what we will do if more people want to start a similar group but for the moment the “Quaker Group” has been given a regular slot in the schedule of Saughton. A Meeting for Worship is also proposed, but arranging it is taking some negotiation with the authorities who have the complicated job of managing the security.

Our financial contributions to those prisoners who are without access to funds continue to be valued highly and last year there was an additional contribution to the fund from a Catholic Church in Glasgow. We supply postal orders to give people the chance to make important or personal phone calls or buy small items at the canteen, but equally not enough to attract the drug gangs.

The experience I am having is that agency is being felt by the prisoners in the group and they all speak of others who want to come along. When a man tells you that when he was on suicide watch and received a letter that helped him, you know the message is good. Going into the prison is a rather ‘blind faith’ experience, because you never know what is happening other than that security is overarching. Within those restrictions if prisoners can discover their own sense of self and that of God within their lives surely the system may become a more humane and loving environment.

Jenny Copsey

Going on Retreat

Going on retreat isn’t something that is very common within my friendship circles but I have been realising over this Christmas/New Year period how important it is. Meeting up with long term friends, catching up on what’s going on their lives and hearing of the pressures they are under – all very similar to those in my own life – I am aware of how valuable it was that I went on retreat last year. So that’s what I encourage other Friends to do. Consider booking yourself on to a retreat.

In the spring, with the help of the Sylvia Marshall Bequest fund, I booked myself on the ‘Living With Stillness’ retreat at the Bamford Community in Derbyshire. The retreat happened over three days in October, from a Thursday afternoon to the Sunday, with a dozen ‘retreatants’ being hosted.

The Bamford Quaker Community has six members and a few core volunteers now. One of the aspects that appealed to me about this retreat was being part, however briefly, of a residential community, since involvement in communities has been a strong part of my life and work journey. Indeed, being there brought back the feelings of my teenage years and early twenties, when I was pursuing a vocation of being a monk at the Taizé Community, where we also had silent retreats.

I had chosen the Living with Stillness retreat in order to quieten down and discover, or re-discover, or sense, what is at 'the centre' for me. I wanted to spend time connecting to that of God which is within me and within all of us. At the time of applying, I felt caught up in busy-ness of all kinds, not just my own – my children's involvement in climate strikes led to their being part of an 'accountability group' for Nicola Sturgeon – and I was finding it hard to stay balanced and grounded. When October came, it didn't feel a great time to be away from home or work; however, having accepted support from the Sylvia Marshall Fund, I felt I had to go. A few months later, it was hard to remember the goodness that was present in the retreat, as I got caught up again in day-to-day patterns of family life and work. Yet from the Christmas conversations I mentioned at the start, I could quickly see the gems I discovered are there and shining brightly within.

While I was at Bamford I realised how much being part of community has meant to my journey. After Taizé, I led a homelessness community in London, then founded a similar one in Glasgow; and in many smaller ways I've found communities can be powerful resources, creating awareness of being together in a common enterprise that is your life and work. I could sense at the Bamford Community how the members were all very different, and that their differences might make difficulties, and yet how much strength comes from their living together and being together.

The Living with Stillness retreat was a silent retreat. This gave us all space; at the beginning I was quite fearful of having so much, worried that my mind might race. It took me a day to settle into it, but, as I did, I found myself able to think, read, re-read, journal, pray and just *be*. Be: with myself, amongst others, able to notice the small things, like the colours, or the sounds, the food, the smiles and the companionship just from being together. We did speak a few times, as part of checking in with the community member guiding the group; and from that I heard a wee bit about the reasons that had drawn the others to join the retreat, as well as hearing about or witnessing some of the things they discovered during these days.

For some, there was healing, for others, revelation. Throughout the days there was a real sense of companionship in the gentleness and seriousness of the participants. We didn't need to know much about each other, but could see it in faces and gestures as we increasingly deepened our sense of community together.

During the retreat we had some brief inputs about prayer and about quietening the mind. There were also art resources, spiritual reading set out for us, as well as a few other optional led exercises. These all helped guide us through our own pathways across the days.

For me, by day two I had discovered I'd learnt a lot about the colour that is within me, the Spirit within. I discovered that it is there when I quieten down. I had forgotten a lot about that. I had forgotten to trust that God is already within. A few months later, for me, even though my day to day

might lead me to be as out of touch with inner peace as ever, I know, I have certainty that within me is Spirit, is God. I can look back at the proof of the drawings I did and the journaling from those days and know it is there at my centre.

This was a special time. Over the Christmas period I found myself thinking about the other retreatants, hoping and praying they are all doing well. I intend to go on a retreat again this year; and I'd encourage Friends to do the same. I would certainly recommend the Bamford Community. They offer a different type of retreat every fortnight, and I know from a Portobello Friend who went on the 'community living' retreat that it is also very good. Please speak to me if you want to know more.

Duncan Wallace

World Day of Prayer: 6 March 2020

In 2020, worship devised by the women of Zimbabwe will be used across the world on Friday 6 March; the theme is *Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk*.

Two sessions of Bible study will take place in preparation for the day. They are to be held at the Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN, on **Friday 7 February**, and on **Friday 21 February**, starting at 10.30 am.

For more information on the event see <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/2020-theme-and-country-zimbabwe/>

See <http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk/AboutWDP.html> for information about the organisation World Day of Prayer



WDP Artwork by Nonny Mathe, Bulawayo

Witness at Faslane, 2020

The dates in 2020 on which it is planned to worship after the manner of Friends by the North Gate of H.M.N.B. Clyde – the Faslane naval base, home to the U.K.'s nuclear-missile-carrying submarines – are as follows. (They are all Sundays.)

15 March

21 June

19 April

11 October

17 May

8 November

On 21 June we look forward to being joined by members of the Northern Friends Peace Board, who will have been meeting the previous day.

Meeting for Worship begins at 11.00 am, which means an early start from South East Scotland. Friends planning to attend should remember to bring something to sit on; weatherproof clothing; and something to eat before returning home.

Alison Burnley

[Alison Burnley's contact details are in the Book of Members for anyone requiring further information; N.B. She is not on email.]

Time to step back and take constructive action

A Statement by the trustees of the Northern Friends Peace Board, 9/1/2020:

We join with others in urging our government to play a constructive and active role in seeking routes to de-escalate tensions following the assassination of General Quasem Solameini. As a community committed to peace, we oppose violent action and reaction by parties in a conflict. We are distressed at the opportunities lost already to build a more constructive set of relationships with Iran through the United States' undermining of the JCPOA nuclear deal. There is a dangerous spiral that has already developed from this, and there is a danger that the UK will be drawn further into this due to its relationship with the United States. This must not be inevitable and there could be devastating consequences for the wider Gulf region and indeed the world. We live together on this planet and should seek to deal with differences positively and to build the conditions in which dialogue, understanding and cooperation can be developed. The space for such dialogue is reduced in the heat of violent conflict. Now is the time to consider the wider consequences, and for restraint and stepping back rather than being drawn into reactive and provocative action.

Some Fruits of Solitude

Following the Revolution of 1689, William Penn was viewed with deep suspicion by the new regime of William III. Three times he was tried for treason and acquitted. After 1691, he reached an informal agreement with the authorities that if he kept out of the public eye he would not be harassed. Some Fruits of Solitude, published in 1693, was written in this period, as was his essay Towards the Peace of Europe (see page 23), and the introduction he wrote to Fox's Journal, which became The Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers (1694).

It is striking how modern Penn's concerns may seem to us. His call for a European Parliament (envisaged as eventually taking in "the Turks and Muscovites ... as seems but fit and just") was ignored between 1726 and World War I, but has been reprinted frequently since; his reflections on humanity (which he tends not to refer to as 'Man') begin with our relationship to the world and its resources.

Some usages have changed over 300 years. Here, admirable = 'astonishing'; and sensible = 'perceptible by the senses' (i.e. capable of being seen, heard, tasted, smelt or felt). Spelling and punctuation are as in the 1993 Everyman paperback edition.

1. **Ignorance.** It is admirable to consider how many millions of people come into, and go out of the world, ignorant of themselves, and of the world they have lived in.
2. If one went to see Windsor Castle, or Hampton Court it will be strange not to observe and remember the situation, the building, the gardens etc. that make up the beauty and pleasure of such a seat: and yet few people know themselves: no, not their own bodies, the houses of their minds, the most curious structure of the world; a living walking tabernacle: nor the world of which it was made and out of which it is fed; which would be so much our benefit, as well as our pleasure, to know. We cannot doubt of this when we are told that the invisible things of God are brought to light by the things that are seen, and consequently we read our duty in them, as often as we look upon them, to him that is the great and wise author of them if we look as we should do.
3. The world is certainly a great and stately volume of natural things; and may be not improperly styled the heiroglyphics of a better: but, alas, how very few leaves of it we do seriously turn over! This ought to be the subject of the education of our youth, who, at twenty, when thy should be fit for business, know little or nothing of it.
4. **Education.** We are in pain to make them scholars, but not men! To talk rather than to know; which is true canting.
5. The first thing obvious to children is what is sensible: and that we make no part of their rudiments.
6. We press their memory too soon, and puzzle, strain and load them with words and rules; to know grammar and rhetoric, and a strange tongue or two, that it is ten to one may never be useful to them; leaving their natural genius to mechanical or physical or natural knowledge uncultivated and

neglected; which would be of exceeding use and pleasure to them through the whole course of their life.

7. To be sure, languages are not to be despised or neglected. But things are still to be preferred.

8. Children had rather be making of tools and instruments of play; shaping, drawing, framing and building, &c. than getting some rules of propriety of speech by heart: and those also would follow with more judgment, and less trouble and time.

9. It were happy if we studied nature more in natural things; and acted according to nature; whose rules are few, plain and most reasonable.

10. Let us begin where she begins, go her pace, and close always where she ends, and we cannot miss of being good naturalists.

11. The creation would no longer be a riddle to us: the heavens, earth and waters, with their respective, various and numerous inhabitants: their productions, natures, seasons, sympathies and antipathies; their use, benefit and pleasure, would be better understood by us: and an eternal wisdom, power, majesty and goodness, very conspicuous to us; through those sensible and passing forms: the world wearing the mark of its maker, whose stamp is everywhere visible, and the characters very legible to the children of wisdom.

12. And it would go a great way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the creation of it.

13. For how could men find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the great creator look them in the face in all and every part thereof?

14. Therefore ignorance makes them insensible, and that insensibility hardly misusing this noble creation that has the stamp and voice of a deity every where, and in every thing, to the observing.

15. It is pity therefore that books have not been composed for youth by some curious and careful naturalists, and also mechanics, in the Latin tongue, to be used in schools, that they may learn things with words: things obvious and familiar to them, which would make the tongue easier to be attained by them.

16. Many able gardeners and husbandmen are yet ignorant of the reason of their calling; as most artificers are of the reason of their own rules that govern their excellent workmanship. But a naturalist and mechanic of this sort, is master of the reason of both, and might be of the practice too, if his industry kept pace with his speculation; which were very commendable; and without which he cannot be said to be a complete naturalist or mechanic.

17. Finally, if man be the index or epitomy of the world, as philosophers tell us, we have only to read ourselves well to be learned in it. But because there is nothing we less regard than the character of the power that made us, which are so clearly written upon us and the world he has given us, and can best tell us what we are and should be, we are even strangers to our own genius: the glass in which we should see that true instructing and agreeable variety, which is to be observed in nature, to the admiration of that wisdom and adoration of that power which made us all.

General Meeting for Scotland

Perth, Saturday 16 November 2019

Morning session

About seventy attended, including about ten Young Friends, who knew one another from attending the residential Summer Shindig and from Quaker Link weekends in Scotland. We started with an invitation to them to tell us about what these Quaker experiences meant to them and why they found them so enjoyable – several contributed their thoughts.

How can we free ourselves for spiritual growth? was the title of our main session. GM has been working over the past year or so on themes relating to how we might manage our Meetings more efficiently. How can we find Friends who are willing to help with all the jobs? How can they be supported when they volunteer? Several AMs had contributed minutes on these subjects and our clerk asked us to work in small groups on a number of threads that all had commented on:

- How can we improve communications? Can we offer training, for example in the use of video conferencing?
- Can we support those who work for us, for example by offering them buddies in their meetings?
- Can we standardise things across various meetings in Scotland, such as utilising external accounting help?
- Should the process of nominating Friends for official roles be more transparent?
- How do we build community? How do we start new Meetings and offer support to any that are struggling?
- Should local meetings carry out spiritual reviews?

The resulting minute identified a number of areas for future development by General Meeting:

- Communications: we already have a GM working group that is looking at the spread of information at all levels, and this is due to report in the spring; we agreed to enlarge this group so that all AMs are involved;
- Role holders within GM itself and within the four AMs could be offered support through special meetings of General Meeting that focus on their roles during a whole meeting, enabling them to learn from each other;
- Standardisation of processes (such as accounting) across several Scottish meetings.

It also identified areas for individual Local and Area Meetings to work on:

- Supporting newcomers as they start their journey with Friends, *e.g.* by offering parts of “Becoming Friends” frequently within Local Meetings (this is a good way for people to get to know each other); providing

them with designated friends whom they could meet regularly and who could help them with explanations of some of the ways Friends use.

- Encouraging community building exercises, such as social events, residential weekends, eating together and evening events in Friends' homes.

Afternoon business

We heard that two people who have worked for General Meeting over recent years will be leaving us; (a) Marion Sharkey, who has provided GM with administrative support for the past five years, is retiring in the New Year; and (b) Mairi Campbell-Jack, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO), is taking up a post as press officer with the Scottish Green Party. We are seeking replacements for them but they will both be much missed.

We decided that GM should express interest in a national initiative that will be rolled out over the next five years to provide Quaker support workers within meetings, for example someone who might be able to work with Friends in remote areas of Scotland.

We looked at the GM budget for next year, considering in particular the support that GM offers for Quaker and non-Quaker charities in Scotland. When we offer regular support we like GM members to receive periodic updates about the charity's work; our GM Treasurer will now follow up a couple of queries about the work being done by charities on our list.

We received a report from the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group which supports our PEO. An external evaluation of the project has been very positive about its importance and about its success, though the final report is not yet available. Scottish Friends joined others in lobbying MSPs to make the Climate Change Bill passing through Holyrood somewhat more ambitious – holding our government to account over this will be the next focus. A submission has been made in respect of the Petition on protection from hate crime, and concerns relating to the General Election are now dominating the agenda.

The UN Conference of the Parties talks (COP26) to discuss climate change are to be hosted in Glasgow next November. 30,000 are expected to attend this event, either as official delegates or with observer status (hopefully including both BYM and QUNO). West Scotland AM will co-ordinate Quaker interaction with this – a briefing meeting will be held at Area Meeting in Glasgow on 11 January 2020.

Conclusion

It was Adwoa Bittle's final meeting as our GM clerk: there was cake with candles, and we wished her well and thanked her profusely for all her energy and support for Scottish Quakers. And then we welcomed Elizabeth Allen who will take over her post in January.

John Phillips

Why Have a Book of Discipline?

Woodbrooke, 8-10 November 2019

It was a privilege to be the Area Meeting representative at the weekend conference led by members of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee at the beginning of November. Being at Woodbrooke is a joy in itself.

Do we need a new Book? The answer is 'yes', because though much of the Red Book, *Quaker Faith & Practice*, is timeless, and speaks to us from more than three hundred years ago, there is a lot that is happening now which is not mentioned – and in many instances we need help and guidance.

Do we need a Book of Discipline at all? Many voices argued that, yes, we do: for our comfort and discomfort; for reading and thankfully finding just what we needed to find at that very moment – one of life's miracles.

We spent time in plenary sessions and in various small groups. I was in one group for decisions and met in two others for discussions – all of which were wide-ranging, enlightening and mostly positive. It was important to be prepared to have an open mind. The first group was on what do we mean by/call God. Semantics and meanings: a word that for some was in the category of 'never use' was for others in that of 'use often'!

There were present five people from Scotland, two of whom are on the Committee, and at least four participants from Wales, at least two being Committee members. I mention this because I attended the small-group discussion on 'cultural aspects' which was led by Catherine James, a Committee member who is a Welsh-speaker. Another Friend there had no understanding of how people from (what I call) the "Celtic fringe" feel when 'England' is used for 'Britain'; Catherine was upset and I was annoyed. Someone said later that a book without cultural understanding is an incomplete document – we need to make clear where things come from.

The last plenary session was to make a list of suggestions of things people hoped would be in the next Book of Discipline – it was an interesting and wide list. I hope it was a helpful one for the Committee to work with. I expect there will be further ideas sent in. It was a very welcome session and a good way to end.

Another joy for me was that I was able to buy from Catherine James a copy of the book written by Friends in Wales to present to schools and libraries as outreach/information about Friends. *Towards the Source*, the English version which I bought, is a delight. [*The Welsh companion volume is Tua'r Tarddiad. The two are available as a set (£15), or Towards the Source alone is £8 from the Quaker Bookshop at Friends House: ISBN 978-0953093526. (Ed.)*]

Thank you, Friends, for enabling me to attend.

Alison Burnley

A Message from the Library Group

Dear F/friends,

As you know, there are on-going developments and changes to the Area Meeting Library at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh. Rooms will be refurbished with the aim of having a welcoming comfortable resource room (in the current library), and a dedicated library in the current crèche room in due course. As part of the work we donated a number of books and pamphlets to the National Library of Scotland, and the list of transferred items is now available by the green book in the current library.

We found through the transfer that a number of books and pamphlets in the catalogue – quite a sizeable number – are no longer in the Library. We are therefore seeking return of any books that might have got mislaid and wish to come back to the library for others to enjoy. *If you do have any items, please return it/them to the reception desk in Victoria Terrace, or to the box near the office.*

We also welcome any thoughts for future developments.

Sarah Davies
Convener

A Message from the Bed & Breakfast Scheme

Our B&B Scheme is in trouble!

We are having to turn more and more potential guests away. This is such a shame because the B&B Scheme not only raises much-needed funds for Area Meeting, it also provides a very welcome service for visiting Quakers and Quaker-connected people.

We are badly in need of more volunteer hosts. If you live in, or reasonably close to, Edinburgh, have a spare bedroom and enjoy meeting other Quakers, please consider joining us! You will then receive emails with details of potential guests and can decide whether to offer B&B for that guest/s. You will never be under pressure. Some hosts prefer to offer only for actual Quakers, or only women, or only men, which is fine.

The B&B Scheme was started more than 30 years ago to help raise funds for the move to the Victoria Terrace Meeting House. Since then it has helped with many other projects, including Kelso Meeting House, window replacements at Victoria Terrace, and alterations to allow better access.

Until recently, most of our B&B hosts have been the original group who started it and have remained very committed to the Scheme. However, not surprisingly, they have been gradually retiring or moving to smaller houses, which is why we are now so in need of new blood!

If you live some way out of Edinburgh, please do not assume you are unsuitable. One of our guests, on holiday in Edinburgh, was very happy to be based by the seaside in Portobello. Transport links from smaller places into the centre of Edinburgh, can be just as good as links from Edinburgh's outer residential areas.

Guests are varied. Some are visiting friends or family, or on business, or visiting Edinburgh for the first time. Sometimes a Quaker living in the remoter parts of Scotland needs a stopover in Edinburgh before journeying on. We also get a steady trickle of Canadian and Australian Quakers, who contact Edinburgh Meeting House, hoping that like their Meeting Houses, we will have guest rooms for travellers. Our Managers are glad to be able to offer the B&B Scheme!

Please contact me for an information sheet, and if you would like to talk to one of our current hosts, I shall be delighted to put you in touch.

Judith Benton
B&B Scheme Coordinator

judith.a.benton@gmail.com; 0131 441 6080 or 07817 098 746

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 9 November 2019 at Bellfield, 16b Bellfield Street, Portobello, Edinburgh

2019/11/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard a reading from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 25.02; this statement from London Yearly Meeting in 1988 reminds us of the personal impact of global pain. We have ensured those present know each other's names and meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

2019/11/02 Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday 4 September 2019

The minutes of our last meeting, held at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House on 4 September 2019, have been signed and entered in the minute book. The minutes of our Area Meeting held on 22 June 2019 at Kelso Quaker Meeting House, have now also been signed and entered in the minute book.

2019/11/03 Matters arising from the minutes

- 1. Robin Naumann/Anna Liebmann meeting for worship for marriage – correction** (2019/06/06 & 2019/09/03.2 refer)

Our Registering Officer has let us know that the request for appointment of

the marriage of Robin Naumann and Anna Liebmann recorded Anna's surname incorrectly. Her full name is Anna Ruth Liebmann Coldham. We have assured ourselves that this is the correct name and we are happy that the wedding proceed as planned.

2. *Enquirers day for Scotland* (2019/09/10 refers)

We have heard a report on this day: Seventeen Friends gathered in Stirling Baptist church in October for 'a friendly introduction to Quakers in Scotland'. Friends came from a wide range of meetings across Scotland and came with a wide ranging experience of Quakerism so far. After an introductory session in which participants talked about how we came to Quakers, the group considered roles within our meetings. Later sessions took the theme 'at the core of Quakerism', considering how Quakers are distinct from other religions and groups. Finally, there was a focus on living out our faith, referring to Peace, Simplicity, Equality, Truth and Sustainability. It was interesting to see the breadth of experience: some Quakers had never heard of Testimonies in this way; and some aspired to living out these values being core to what Quakerism is. The day was a chance to ask and answer questions and to gain more insight into Quakerism by hearing other Friends' stories. The approach of the day has the potential to make spaces for these conversations throughout the year for all within the Meeting, whether or not people are new to Quakerism.

We thank Rici Marshall Cross, Henry Thompson and Mariot Dallas, who organised this event for General Meeting for Scotland on our behalf.

2019/11/04 Reports

1. *Junior Yearly Meeting 2019*

We have heard from Oliver Grothey about Junior Yearly Meeting, held 12-15 April at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. JYM addressed the issues of privilege, diversity and inclusion. We heard of the discussions, the fun events, and daily Meeting for Worship. Oliver read the epistle from JYM, which can be found here: <http://www.yqspace.org.uk/jym-2019>. Oliver thanked Area Meeting for enabling him to attend, and we thank him for his report.

2. *General Meeting for Scotland*

GMS was held in Aberdeen on 14 September, with a focus on the climate emergency and our response. Phil Lucas has reported that the meeting heard seven moving personal accounts about how individual Friends had responded, either recently or over lifetimes to the developing climate and environmental crisis.

The meeting was told about COP26, the 26th United Nations international conference of parties concerned with climate change issues, which is due to be held in Glasgow in November 2020. British and Scottish Quakers have applied to be given observer status at the conference and will be exploring ways in which we can support it from the fringe and more directly by ensuring that delegates from poorer countries are given the support they

need to attend. West Scotland Friends are receiving support from Friends House staff as they begin to address the work involved.

Among the appointments made was that of Nicola Maharg (West Scotland) to serve as Assistant GM Clerk from January 2020.

There was a report about the many activities of our parliamentary engagement work, including the very successful event on land reform at the Edinburgh Book Festival in August.

Phil has also told us that Mairi Campbell-Jack, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, is taking up a new post with the Scottish Green Party, and a replacement will be sought.

3. *Meeting for Sufferings*

MfS held meetings on 6 July and from 4-6 October; we have heard a report from Henry Thompson. There is a lot going on, which is covered in a report in the current edition of *Sesame*. Henry mentioned in particular the following issues:

- Gender diversity: Quaker Life Central Committee is happy to receive submission on this topic from meetings and individuals.
- There was major discussion about the future of Britain Yearly Meeting, emphasising the meeting-centred approach and the aim to have locally-based development workers within reach of every Quaker community within five years. This does not mean that Friends House will be closed. There are many difficulties which are going to have to be addressed to make this possible.
- The court & prison register had been discussed, including who should be recorded. Acting under concern is almost a pre-requisite for having one's suffering recorded.
- We were introduced to the concept of 'just transition' which implies that when working for a sustainable future, we must take with us, those who have least.
- We were reminded that there is a policy governing public statements made on behalf of Friends. This can be found at:
www.quaker.org.uk/documents/speaking-out-briefing.

2019/09/05 Membership matters

Arrests

We record the following arrests and court appearances of those associated with our Area Meeting in the course of activity with Extinction Rebellion (XR), and agree to forward this information to Meeting for Sufferings:

Saul Kenrick, 30 September: found guilty, fined £200 for peaceful protest in April.

Justin Kenrick arrested, 7 October at Parliament Square while sitting locked on to another to slow the clearing of the protest site. Taken to Fresh Wharf Custody Base, Barking; released later that night under investigation.

Jonathan Baxter (attender) arrested, 9 October, Broad Sanctuary London; taken to Acton Police Station for processing, released under investigation.

Cath Dyer arrested (along with her husband **Richard**), 9 October, Broad Sanctuary, London; taken to Charing Cross police station for processing and released under investigation.

Saul Kenrick (attender) and **Justin Kenrick** arrested 9 October at Parliament Square while sitting locked on to one another. Taken to Charing Cross, and released later that night under investigation. Saul was given an exclusion order (meaning he wasn't allowed to be anywhere in the Borough of Westminster – probably due to his 30 September conviction).

Eva Schonveld (attender), 10 October arrested after being glued to the road for five hours as part of the peaceful occupation of the road outside the Oil and Gas conference, Liverpool Street. **Blue, Saul and Justin Kenrick** in support. She was 'de-arrested' immediately.

Justin Kenrick, 29 October: in City of London Magistrates Court, along with 3 others (a postman, a procurement officer, a child psychologist), found guilty of peaceful protest in April, with each ordered to pay costs amounting to £415 and a conditional discharge which means a penalty (e.g. a fine) will also be imposed if found guilty for subsequent October actions.

Justin Kenrick and three others, 30 October: appeared in Sheriff Court in Edinburgh in relation to April's North Bridge protest. The court case was delayed until Feb 24-26 due to the absence of a defendant.

2019/11/06 Appointments, and Nominations Committee

1. Nominations Committee puts forward the following names for consideration:

To serve from January 2020 - December 2022

Elders Esther Shreeve (South Edinburgh); Marion Littler (Kelso)

Pastoral care & oversight Carol Dean (Central Edinburgh); Audrey Sinton (Central Edinburgh); Duncan Wallace (Central Edinburgh)

To serve from January 2020 - December 2020

Pastoral care & oversight John Eccles (Central Fife)

To serve from April 2020 – March 2021

Pastoral care & oversight Dorothy Buglass (South Edinburgh)

To serve from October 2019 – September 2022

Prison Minister Jenny Copsey (Kelso)

We appoint these Friends accordingly.

2. Deputy Registering Officer Kirsten Phillips (Central Edinburgh) completed her triennium at the end of September 2019 and is not willing to serve another triennium but is willing to continue in post until a new appointment made. We agree to this arrangement and thank Kirsten for continuing.
3. We note that the following people have come to the end of their terms of service, and thank them warmly for their work on our behalf:

Overseers: Sue Proudlove (3 years); Ruth Follan (3 years);

7 Victoria Terrace Management committee: Rosemary Hartill (3 years)

Festival Committee: Alan Sayle (9 years).

4. We have heard that owing to the continuing illness of her mother, for whom she is a main carer, Rachel Crockett (Polmont) feels unable to convene Nominations committee at present. Pat Lucas (East Lothian), with the help of Fiona Paterson (Portobello & Musselburgh), has agreed to act in a caretaker role for the committee for the next six months. We note this arrangement, and thank them; we convey our good wishes to Rachel, and encourage Nominations Committee in the effort to fill roles.

2019/11/07 Matters from local meetings

Diana Simcock from East Lothian LM has outlined plans for a bid to Quaker Peace & Social Witness to host one of three workers QPSW is planning to appoint to develop networks confronting the climate emergency. The application timetable did not allow for this to be considered by Area Meeting prior to application, but we agree this is appropriately a local meeting initiative. We support this bid, and if it is successful, we encourage East Lothian LM to keep us informed of developments, and seek support from elsewhere in South East Scotland AM as appropriate.

2019/11/08 Recommendation from AM Trustees – Experiments in Faith

At their meeting on 30 October 2019, our Trustees recorded the following minute:

Experiments in Faith

Following the successful ‘Vibrancy in Meetings’ pilot programme, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and BYM Trustees are considering how to support Quaker communities and also how to bring central work closer to them. They have agreed to place a local development worker within reach of every Quaker community in Britain within the next 5 years; and also to trial a pilot hub or cluster as a base for other BYM and Woodbrooke staff outside London and Birmingham. Initial expressions of interest are requested by 1 December 2019. At this stage, we consider that our AM should express a desire to be involved in both elements of the work.

Ken Jobling, Clerk of AM Trustees, has indicated that there is also interest from West Scotland Area Meeting, and it is likely that there will be a Scottish presence of some sort from this initiative.

In response to concerns expressed about moving away from Quakers’ traditional voluntarist approach, we have heard of the effectiveness of the vibrancy project, which was a pilot for this approach.

We ask Trustees to proceed with the application for both elements as proposed.

2019/11/09 Festival committee: review of Venue 40 2019

Janet Grimwade, Sue Proudlove, Tony Wilkes and Alan Sayle have presented the report on activities at 7 Victoria Terrace Edinburgh under the banner of Venue 40 during the Fringe 2019, starting with a film presentation.

Following last year's challenges resulting in unacceptably long hours for staff, it had been decided to reduce the programme; and fire regulations meant a slight reduction in the number of seats available in the theatre space (65 to 60). This is reflected in the number of seats sold, and in the financial report.

Seven different groups performed in the theatre for one, two or three weeks. The Sorries and Accident Avoidance Training for Cutlery Users proved popular. Other companies found it more difficult to attract an audience despite enthusiastic feedback from those who did attend.

Majk Stokes and friends put on three concerts with the proceeds going entirely to the nominated charities - Quaker work at home and abroad, Mary's Meals and the Grassmarket Project. Bucket collections were also held for the three charities.

As a result of our reduced programme, the Meeting Room was available for a variety of outreach activities. In Week 1, a small but enthusiastic group folded paper cranes and made small notebooks, and there was a chance to see an exhibition about Scottish WW1 conscientious objectors. In Week 2 there was an art workshop and the offer of a quiet space to take a break. In Week 3, Luath Press arranged a programme of 15 different talks as part of Scotlandfest 2019.

The Eating House was busy serving coffee and excellent cake and delicious meals as well as feeding staff and volunteers.

The Meeting House was open to the public from 11.00 am when the Eating House opened and Meeting for Worship took place. It closed at 8.00 pm when the final audience and café customers left. This meant long days to be covered by the staff who act as venue managers supported by our national volunteers and members of Festival Committee. However it was felt that we had succeeded in making things more manageable within current resources. Feedback from volunteers and performers has been positive.

This year a new ticketing system was used. This worked well thanks to the work of the box office volunteers and of Jonathan Riddell and Alan Sayle who supported them.

Last year there was some concern that there might be a lack of support for the Fringe from local Friends although there was awareness of its importance as outreach. However it is clear that a large number of people are involved in supporting Festival efforts in addition to our staff, the national volunteers and members of Festival Committee. This includes the hosts who offer accommodation, those who supplied cake for the staff and volunteers, those who joined the volunteers for a meal and everyone who came along to events or performances, plus, of course those Friends who organised outreach activities in the Meeting Room. One of the volunteers remarked that they felt the Festival was well supported by local Friends.

Festival Committee has decided to continue with roughly the same model for 2020, with the Meeting Room to be used again for outreach activities in Weeks 1 and 2. We look forward to getting proposals from individuals or

groups who would like to organise an activity. Suggestions of a charity working internationally are also welcome, to replace Mary's Meals which we have supported for three years.

Festival Committee would welcome additional members: this involves being around during the year to help with planning as well as during August. Alan Sayle has presented the projected account on behalf of the Festival Committee, recommending the transfer of £5,600 to the Area Meeting General Account: £700 to be disbursed to each nominated charity in the Venue Programme, *i.e.* Central Quaker work; Mary's Meals; and the Grassmarket Project. The remaining sum of £3,500 is a contribution towards costs incurred at the Meeting House during August. We approve this recommendation.

We warmly thank members of the Festival Committee, the Meeting House staff, national volunteers, local hosts and volunteers, and all who ran activities during the period. We note that this is Alan Sayle's last fringe as treasurer to the Festival Committee, and thank him for his long service in this role.

2019/11/10 The STIR effect – review of how we do Area Meeting

Alastair Cameron has provided a personal review of the changes introduced by the STIR (Short-term review group) process since early 2017. He has noted that there has been little change in numbers attending Area Meeting since then, and that the venue for our meetings appears not to have a significant impact on numbers. He has highlighted the following issues:

- The opportunity STIR has created to involve children and young people in our all-day meetings
- The ways in which our all-day meetings have been used as community-building events, as well as to deal with necessary business and promote Quaker witness
- The impact on local meetings of hosting our all-day meetings, and whether this has been a joy or an imposition
- The 'lop-sided' approach, which in particular has limited the opportunity of Central Edinburgh LM to influence the agenda for our 'non-business' activities in all-day meetings

He has expressed view that there should be a review of our communications methods, including the print edition of *Sesame*; our web pages; the use of social media including Facebook by local meetings; and email communications within AM. In particular, the interactions between these media should be considered.

We have heard of the difficulty of managing the mailing lists. Central Edinburgh LM's children's meeting would like the opportunity to host Area Meeting on occasion.

We agree:

- To ask Local Meetings to consider how the STIR changes have affected

ted them, and to put forward any ideas for improvement for 2020 and beyond

- To review the ways in which we communicate with one another.

We thank Alastair for his report and the work he does for Area Meeting.

2019/11/11 Inclusion & diversity – how are we doing?

In June 2019, we considered issues of privilege in Quaker life, and recorded the following minute:

We recognise the need to embed in our Quaker life, practices which encourage an inclusive and diverse approach. We ask local meetings to consider what this might mean for them, including in relation to outreach. We ask local meetings to share ideas and approaches that are found to be helpful.

We agree to lay down the Diversity & Inclusion Group, and to ask our clerks to bring these matters back to our area meeting agendas, twice a year in the first instance, to review the changing position over time.

We remind local meetings of this minute, and ask them to bring to our meeting in March 2020, the results of their considerations.

2019/11/12 Conferences & events

1. Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre are organising workshops in association with the proposed Opposing War Memorial, to be erected in Princes Street Gardens. The lead artist, Kate Ive, has devised a design based around *Davidia involucrata*, ‘the handkerchief tree’, and workshop participants will have the opportunity to design their own handkerchief. The Edinburgh event will be on Wednesday 27 November. Details will be included in a forthcoming email to AM subscribers.
2. Our friend Anna Levin, formerly of Polmont LM, will be launching her book *Incandescent* at Golden Hare Books, 68 St Stephen Street, Edinburgh on Thursday 14 November at 6.30pm. All are welcome. Tickets will be available at the door and on Eventbrite. Anna will be attending meeting for worship at Polmont on Sunday 17 November and will be giving a short talk afterwards.
3. Mark Ballard has thanked Area Meeting for its financial support for the Wiston weekend. The next event will be 11-13 September 2020.
4. General Meeting for Scotland will be held next Saturday, 16 November, in Perth. The meeting will hear from young people who attended Summer Shindig; and will consider responses from Area Meetings in Scotland to the ‘menu for change’, which we discussed at our September meeting. Full details are in the current *Scottish Friend*, available at:

<http://www.quakerscotland.org/general-meeting>.

2019/11/13 Correspondence & announcements

1. We note that General Meeting for Scotland is recruiting a new Administrator, a paid position, working from home for around 8 hours per week. The closing date for applications is 25 November, and full details are in the current edition of *Scottish Friend*.

2. We have received the October newsletter from the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility – this can be obtained from the Clerk.

2019/11/14 Closing minute

Earlier in the day, we shared in all-age worship, and participated in a workshop on the theme, *Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness* (from *Advices & Queries, Q. F. & P. 1.02*). We thank Marian Willoner for leading us in this. Before lunch, Anna, Kay and Adam told us about the Scottish youth climate strikes and responded eloquently to our questions, and we thank them too.

33 members and 20 attenders have been at all or part of today's meeting. Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 14	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 5	Kelso 1	Penicuik 1
Polmont 5	Portobello & Musselburgh 20	South Edinburgh 6	Tweeddale -	

We thank Portobello & Musselburgh LM for hosting the day, and particularly all those who catered for us so generously.

We next meet on Monday 20 January 2020, 7.00 pm at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh.

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron
Clerk
Cath Dyer
Assistant Clerk

From An ESSAY towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European DYET, PARLIAMENT, or ESTATES

... I am come now to the last objection, that sovereign princes and states will hereby become not sovereign; a thing they will never endure. But this also is a mistake, for they remain as sovereign at home as ever they were. Neither their power over their people, nor the usual revenue they pay them, is diminished: it may be the war establishment may be reduced, which will indeed of course follow, or be better employed to the advantage of the public. So that the sovereignties are as they were, for none of them have now any sovereignty over one another: and if this be called a lessening of their power, it must be only because the great fish can no longer eat up the little ones, and that each sovereignty is equally defended from injuries, and disabled from committing them; *cedant arma togæ* is a glorious sentence; the voice of the dove; the olive branch of peace.

William Penn, 1693

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Every Sunday

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace	9.30 am & 11.00 am
South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road	10.30 am
Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre	10.45 am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso	10.30 am

Every Wednesday

Mid-Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace	12.30 – 1 pm
--------------------------------------	--------------

First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik <i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch</i>	11.00 am
Portobello & Musselburgh: Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP <i>Half an hour – no children's meeting.</i>	7.30 pm

Second Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: Dunbar Town House, High Street, Dunbar	11.00 am
--	----------

Second and Fourth Sundays in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh: Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP. <i>Children welcome.</i>	11.00 am
Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles <i>All welcome, but please phone to confirm 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389</i>	10.30 am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am

Fourth Sunday in the Month

North Edinburgh Meeting: Broughton St Mary's Church, Edinburgh	7.00 pm
--	---------

Fifth Sunday in the Month

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
--	----------

Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: Dunbar Town House, High Street, Dunbar	11.00 am
--	----------

So far as we know, there are no regular meetings for worship on University premises. **Mark Borthwick** is the named Quaker contact on the University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy website, and there is a Facebook Group at www.facebook.com/groups/EUQuakerSoc

Distribution of *Sesame* and *Scottish Friends Newsletter*

The current practice is to distribute one copy of *Sesame* and the *Scottish Friends Newsletter* to every Member and Attender household. Contributions to the costs of *Sesame* are always warmly welcomed by the Area Meeting Treasurer.. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact **Joanna Swanson** at jmswanson69@gmail.com. A large print version is also available on request. Published by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165. Printed by Footprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.